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A
HISTORY OF THE SOURASHTRAS
IN
SOUTHERN INDIA

BY
THE SOURASHTRA LITERARY SOCIETIES
OF
MADURA AND MADRAS.

REPRODUCED BY
The Sourashtra Brahmana Central Board,
MADURA.

Printed at
Mahalakshmi Vilasam Press, Madura.

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PREFACE.

This little book has been published by the Sourashtra Literary Societies at Madura and Madras for the information of those who are not well acquainted with the origin and history of the Sourashtras, in accordance with the resolution passed at a meeting held in the premises of the Sourashtra Literary Society, at No. 84, Nyneappa Naiken Street, Peddu Naiken Pettah, Black Town, Madras, on Saturday, the 17th of January 1891. It is intended to remove all misunderstandings about the race and to throw light on the origin, history, language, literature and religion of the Sourashtras in Southern India.

The following books were consulted:—

Dr. Balfour's Encyclopædia of India.

Romesch Chunder Dutt's Ancient India.

Alexander Cunningham's Ancient Geography
of India.

Tod's Rajasthan.

Professor Lassen on Prakrita Languages.

Bombay Gazetteer.

Researches of the Asiatic Society.

A Grammar of the Gondian Languages.

The following members were present at the meeting:—

M. R. Ry. M. Alagariyo.

„ M. Alagarswamiyo.

„ M. R. M. Chockaiyo.

„ Annahn. K. Hanumanthaiyo.

„ N. Hanumanthaiyo.

„ Laguduvan. Kuppaiyo.

„ N. K. Kuppaiyo.

„ K. R. Nagaswamaiyo.

„ V. S. Nagaswamaiyo.

„ N. S. Oomapathaiyo.

„ Thoen Rama Royo.

„ T. M. Ramaswamaiyo.

„ K. V. Subbaiyo.

„ K. Sundara Royo.

„ N. M. Sundaramaiyo.

„ Thurvasun Thurvasaiyo.

„ K. Venkataramaiyo.

(Signed) K. V. SUBBAIYO,

Secretary,

MADRAS,

17th January 1891.

T. M. RAMASWAMAIYO,

Chairman.

A HISTORY OF THE SOURASHTRAS IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

1. Sourashtra was one of the fifty-six kingdoms of India, mentioned in the traditional accounts and the ancient books of the Hindus. This kingdom was very rich and prosperous during the seventeenth century A. D. It comprised the southern half of the Peninsula of Gujarat, Western Rajputana, Malwa, and the maritime districts around the Gulf of Kambay. It was divided into five Provinces called Rashtras. They were Kathyarashtra, Kambeyarashtra, Aryarashtra, Mithilarashtra and Vindhyaashtra. Some of the principal towns were Valabhipura, Gohilvari, Sourashtranagari, Anahalwari, Mithilanagari, Champanagari, Devagiri, Ujjayantanagari, Nandi, Dwaraka and Kamboowari. It is watered by the Subhramati, the Mahi, the Tapti and the Narmada. The Aryawali (Arawali) hills form the northern boundary, and Vindhya range, the southern boundary.

2. The extensive application of the name of Guzerat to the Peninsula is a matter of political convenience rather than ethnographical applica-

tion. The name of Gujar was confined in the time of Hwen Thsang to Western Rajputana, and it was still a distinct country from Sourashtra. The settlement of the Rathor tribe from Northern Rajputana and Upper Ganges must have driven the Gujar race from their original homes and forced them to the south to Anhalwara Pattan and Eder, and before 472 A. D. the Gujar race were driven to the north as far as Kambay. Alaf Khan, the first Mahomedan Conqueror under Alaudin Khilji, fixed his head-quarters at Anhalwara in the very heart of Sourashtra. Cunningham thinks it probable that the name of Guzerat was applied to this new province of the Delhi Empire. Even to this day the name Guzerat is not used by the natives of the peninsula itself who continue to call their country Surat and Kathiwar. According to Terray, the capital of Sourashtra was Junagar. The etymological meaning of the term Sourashtra is a "Fruitful kingdom."

3. It would not be out of place here to give a brief account of the history of the ancient kingdom of Sourashtra and its adjacent territories. After the retreat of Alexander the Great, Chandragupta expelled the Greeks out of India, defeating Seleucus, the Greek ruler of the Indus Provinces. Kanishka ruled Cashmir in the first century after Christ. Little of any importance

is noted before the time of Kanishka. We are told that fifty-two kings reigned for a period of 1266 years from the time of Kuru Panchala to Abhimanyu, the successor of Kanishka. Jaloka, the successor of Asoka, was an orthodox Hindu king and drove back the Mlechchas who were pouring in from the west. Jaloka was succeeded by Damodara II, and then came the foreign conquerors. Thirty-one kings ruled from Kanishka to the time of Matrigupta, the contemporary of Vikramaditya of Ujjain. Chief among them were Nara, Abhimanyu, Vasunanda, Gokarna, Prata-paditya, Sandhimati and Shreshta Sena. From the brief account of Kashmir we now turn to Gujarat. A race of rulers, generally known as the "Shahu Kings," ruled the country. They were known as the *Shahu Kings of Sourashtra*.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Nahapana | 13. Vira Daman |
| 2. Usavadata | 14. Iswara Datta |
| 3. Swami Chastna | 15. Vijaya Shahu |
| 4. Jaya Dama | 16. Damajata Sri |
| 5. Jiva Dama | 17. Rudro Shahu |
| 6. Rudro Daman | 18. Visva Sinha |
| 7. Rudro Sinha | 19. Atri Daman |
| 8. Sri Shahu | 20. Rudro Sinha |
| 9. Sangha Daman | 21. Asa Daman |
| 10. Daman Shahu | 22. Swami Rudra Shahu |
| 11. Yasa Daman | 23. Swami Rudro Shahu II |
| 12. Damajata Sri | |

4. The most remarkable inscription of the Shahu kings is that on a bridge near Girnar known as Rudro Daman's bridge. On the other hand Gautamiputra of the Andhra line boasts in an inscription in a cave at Nassik, that he had conquered Sourashtra, Kutch, and other countries and destroyed the race of the Khaharatas.

5. From B. C. 26 to 430 A. D. the Andhras were the supreme power in India and held distant kingdoms under their subjection. The kingdom of Sourashtra was lost by them in the first century after Christ, until it was reconquered by Gautamiputra subsequently. The date of this conquest of the Shahu by Gautamiputra of the Andhra line forms the subject of much controversy into which none can enter profitably. Skandagupta of the Gupta line of kings appointed Parnadata to govern his kingdom of the Sourastras. He was the last great king of the Gupta race. Far Hian observes that the powerful Valabhis were for a time ruling the kingdom. When the power of the Guptas, the then Emperors of India, was slowly decaying, an enterprising military commander named Senapati Bhatarka asserted his independence in Gujerat, and was the founder of the Valabhi dynasty of Sourashtra.

6. During a period of anarchy the people were compelled to abandon their happy abodes owing to the frequent invasions of the Mahomedans. The people who emigrated to the north have according to the ranks of different classes, gradually abandoned their mother tongue and blended with the natives of that part of India and became domiciled, for the language, the manners and customs were more or less similar to their own. Whereas those who went south were unable to mix themselves with the Dravidians of the south, as their language and customs were not the same. Even to this day they have not forsaken their language, religion and social customs.

LANGUAGE AND ALPHABET.

7. The inscriptions of Asoka are invaluable to us, for a study of the language and alphabet of Northern India in the third century B. C. They show that the spoken language of Northern India was essentially the same from the Himalaya to the Vindhya mountains and from the Indus to the Ganges. There are slight variations, however, from which antiquarians have made out three varieties of the spoken tongues of the period. General Cunningham calls them the *Panjabi* or North-Western dialect, the *Ujjaini* or middle dialect, and the *Magadhi* or the eastern dialect.

8. The Panjabi dialect is closer to Sanskrit than others. The Ujjaini dialect has its *r* and *l*, while the Magadhi dialect is marked by the entire absence of *r*, for which *l* has been substituted as, Lajah for Rajah, Dasalatha for Dasaratha, &c.

9. Considering then the slightly varying dialect as one spoken language, antiquarians have held that that language is Pali. Prinsep called the language to be "intermediate between Sanskrit and Pali." It will be seen that the spoken language of Northern India has undergone considerable changes within the last four thousand years. In the Vedic period it was the Sanskrit of the Rig Veda, in the Epic period it was the Sanskrit of the Brahmanas, in the Rationalistic and Buddhist periods it was *Pali*, in the Puranic period it was the Prakrit, and since the rise of the Rajputs in the 10th century it has been the Hindi.

10. Vararuchi, one of the nine gems of Vikramaditya's Court, is the oldest grammarian who treats of Prakrit dialects. He distinguishes four distinct dialects, *viz.*, the Maharashtri, the Sauraseni (Sourashtra proper) derived from the Sanskrit, the Paisachi and the Magadhi, which last two are said to be derived from the Sauraseni. These Prakrit dialects gradually came into use from the older Pali language, which was the

sacred language of the Buddhists and had been the spoken tongue for a thousand years or more. Indeed the political and religious causes which ushered in a new form of Hinduism in the place of declining Buddhism, had undoubtedly some influence in establishing the newer Prakrit dialects in the place of the older Pali.

11. From the subject of the language, we turn to the subject of alphabet.

The Devanagari character in which Sanskrit is now written is of comparatively recent origin. The oldest Indian character known is that in which Asoka's inscriptions were recorded in the third century before Christ. It is necessary to mention that these inscriptions are recorded in two distinct characters, one reading from right to left like the modern Arabic and Persian, and the other reading from left to right like the modern Devanagari and the European characters. The former is called the Ariano-Pali, while the latter called the Indo-Pali is the common character of all other texts of Asoka's inscriptions.

12. The Ariano-Pali character is not one of Indian origin, and was never used in India except in the extreme western frontier. Mr. Thomas rightly concludes that it has no claim to an indi-

genous origin in India, based as it manifestly is upon an alphabet cognate with the Phœnecian.

13. On the other hand, the Indo-Pali character was not only universally used in India, but can claim to be of indigenous Indian origin. Mr. Thomas has no hesitation in stating that it is an independently devised and locally matured scheme of writing.

14. General Cunningham maintains with Mr. Thomas the Indian origin of the Indo-Pali character.

15. The ancient Sourashtra alphabet has almost the same form as the Devanagari character, and even the words spoken in the houses correspond philologically with the words of Sanskrit origin. Although the Sourashtra alphabet is derived from the Sanskrit, yet there are several letters which are peculiar to the former language. The short *e* and *o* do not exist in the Sanskrit language; while every language derived therefrom contains them. The short *e* and *o* are separately designated in the modern Sourashtra alphabet and the formation of the same character being subsequently modified.

LITERATURE.

16. It is now fifty-seven years since the first volume of Comparative Grammar by Francis Bopp was published, and the wonder is that while during this long interval almost all the languages of Northern India have been philologically investigated by competent scholars, the language of half a million of the unfortunate Sourashtras has remained almost unknown to the great philologist of the nineteenth century. The Sourashtra language, like all other Prakrit languages of Northern India, possesses a literature of its own, but it is singular that, unlike Telugu and Tamil, the sister languages of the Peninsula, they have had not an indigenous grammar adapted to the current language and literature, and this is also the case with the Hindi, the Marathi, the Bengali, the Odhra, the Guzerati etc. The absence of native grammars in the languages of Northern India cannot be accounted for in any other way than by the fact, that these languages being entirely derived from the Sanskrit, both directly and indirectly, through the medium of the different Prakrita languages, as the Romance languages are from the Latin, the local scholars have treated with contempt as mere dialects subserving no noble purpose. True, we have numerous

Prakrita grammars written by the ancient sages of India, and although these grammars treat of such languages as the Maharashtra and the Saurashtra (Sourashtra) the languages now spoken in those provinces, which bear these names, are not represented by those grammars, as their reciprocal relation is the same as that existing between the old Anglo-Saxon and the present English tongue.

17. Professor Wilson was of opinion that the so-called Prakrita languages were artificially formed by the learned for dramatic purposes, but Professor Lassen, on the contrary refutes this opinion and says that the old Prakrit languages are represented by the present provincial tongues. The Sourashtras are Aryas and their language, their institutions, their manners and customs furnish ample evidence towards the fact; but to study any of the Indian language critically, a knowledge of the great Aryan language and an intimate acquaintance with the 'Prakrit Prakasa' of Vararuchi and Hemachandracharya are essential. The great literary names among the Sourashtras were Patanjali, Pingalacharya, Hemachandracharya, Valmiki, Dandi, Bhavabhuti, Kalidasa and several illustrious sages of India. The literature consists chiefly of works on Bharata,

Bhagavata, Ramayana, works on the Puranas, on medicine, on astronomy, on astrology and on magical incantations.

18. *Institutions*:- When the Sourashtras settled in the south, they reproduced the institutions of their mother country in the new land; but owing to the influence of the Southern Dravidians some of the institutions became extinct. During their migrations, the men were under the guidance of their leader, and the process of migration tended to increase the power of kinship. The people were divided into four heads called *Govndas* (chiefs), *Saulins* (elders), *Voydoos* (physicians) and *Bhoutuls* (religious men).

19. Some traces of the division still survive in the now neglected institution of Govndans. The Govndans were supposed to be responsible for the acts and doings of their men. The masses enjoyed the property under the joint undivided Hindu family system as prescribed in the Code of Manu. The chiefs were the Judges in both civil and criminal affairs. They were aided in deciding cases by a body of nobles called *Saulins* (Elders). The office of Govndo is hereditary in Madura District whereas in other centres it is elective. The office of the *Soulins* is to make enquiries and try all cases connected with the

community and abide by the decision of the chiefs. The *Voydoos* (Pandits) and Bhoutuls (Josis and Kavis also ranked with Voydoos and Bhoutuls) had their honours on all important occasions, and they are placed in the same rank with the Elders. The Karestuns or the Commons are the whole body of the masses. Their voice is necessary on certain important occasions, as during the ceremonies of ex-communication and prayaschittas for admitting renegades and during periodical meetings of the community. The Govndans at present are not exercising any of their powers except in some religious matters.

LIFE.

20. The Sourashtra Brahmins were originally leading a purely religious life, but now they have begun to do business of different descriptions fitted to their position. Their chief occupation is agriculture, but some are trading, dyeing and weaving; however, it can be safely affirmed that their business interferes in no way with their religious creed and ceremonies. The name Putnulgars means *Silk weavers*, and is sometimes erroneously applied to the Sourashtras too; but, on the contrary, the term strictly applies to all classes of weavers in southern India called Seniyars, Kaikkolars, Devangas, Kshatris (Khattris),

Parayas, Sengundas, Mudaliars, Saliyars, Chettys Padmasalays, but not to the Sourashtras in any way. The Sourashtras are now seen as a mercantile community. They are brave but humble, God fearing, hospitable, fond of festivities and amusements.

RELIGION.

21. The Sourashtras, it is said, were originally a class of sun-worshippers from Soura meaning sun, but the term *Sourashtra* means inhabitants of the "Fruitful kingdom." Their religion is Hinduism, and they were originally Madhvas. After their settlement in Southern India some of them owing to the preachings of Sankaracharya and Ramanujacharya, were converted into Saivaites and Vaishnavites respectively. The Sourashtras belong to Akshobhya and Sankaracharya Matas.

22. The population of the Sourashtra living in the Madras Presidency is very nearly estimated to be 104 thousands. The places where they reside are given in a tabular form annexed below.

District.	Centres.	Pupulation.
Madura Dist.	Madura, Periyakulam, Palani, Nelakota, Vatlakundu, Paramakudi, Sivaganga, Ramnad, Dindigul. ...	50,000
Tinnevelly „	Palamcottah, Nattani, Viravanellore, Vilangudi, Kottar, Pudukudi etc. ...	3,000
Trichinopoly „	Vurayur, Puttur, Srirangam, Trichinopoly, Pudukota, Iluppur ...	15,000
Tanjore „	Tanjore, Ayyampett, Ammapett, Bhuvanagiri, Pasikadei, Allur, Tirubhuvanam. Kumbakonam & Negapatam ...	20,000
Salem „	Salem, Sevvaypet, Rasipuram, Namakal, Paramati, & Mysore Provinces ...	8,000
South Arcot „	Bhuvanagiri, Pondicherry etc.	1,000
North Arcot „	Walajabad, Vellore, Naravanam, Tirupati, Arni and Nagari ...	5,000
Chingleput „	Madras and Conjeevaram ...	2,000
		1,04,000

23. The Sourashtras, like other nations of India, are divided into four great divisions, *viz.*, Brahma, Kshatriya, Vaisyas and Sudra. The Vaisyas and Sudras are to be found in almost all towns and villages, and especially at Tirupati, Nagari, Narayanavanam, Arni, Kottar, Palani, Palamkottah, Vilangudi, and Viravanallur. As a class they are not rich; and education is in a backward state among them, but attempts are being made by the Sourashtra Literary Societies to impart primary education. A Sourashtra Primary School is already established in Madura and is progressing very creditably.

A Grammatagaphical Table

Vowels, 14.

Dévanāgarī.	Sourāshtra.	Uttala.	Telugu.	English.
अ	अ	अ	అ	a
आ	आ	आ	ఆ	ā
इ	इ	इ	ఇ	i
ई	ई	ई	ఈ	ī
उ	उ	उ	ఉ	u
ऊ	ऊ	ऊ	ఊ	ū
ऋ	ॠ	ॠ	ఋ	rī
ॠ	ॡ	ॡ	ౠ	rī
ॡ	ॢ	ॢ	ౡ	e
ॢ	ॣ	ॣ	ౢ	é
ॣ	।	।	ౣ	ai
।	॥	॥	౤	o
॥	०	०	౥	ó
०	१	१	౦	au

A Grammatagaphical Table

Consonants. 35.

Dévanāgarī.	Sourāshtra.	Uttala.	Telugu.	English.
क	क	क	క	ka
ख	ख	ख	ఖ	kha
ग	ग	ग	గా	ga
घ	घ	घ	ఘ	gha
ङ	ङ	ङ	ఙ	nga
च	च	च	చ	cha
छ	छ	छ	ఛ	chha
ज	ज	ज	జ	ja
झ	झ	झ	ఝ	jha
ञ	ञ	ञ	ఞ	nya
ट	ट	ट	త	ta
ठ	ठ	ठ	థ	tha
ड	ड	ड	ద	dā
ढ	ढ	ढ	డ	dha
न	न	न	న	na
प	प	प	ప	pa
फ	फ	फ	ఫ	pha

The Sanskrit letters *lri*, *lri*, the *rise* and the *anusvara* do not appear in the above Alphabet: but as pure Sanskrit words are very often used in the Sourāshtra language, so, they may be retained.

A sort of semi-nasal is frequently employed in this language and has this form .

ஸ்ரீரஸ்து.

தென் இந்தியாவிலுள்ள ஸௌராஷ்ட்ரர் விஷயம்.

இதிஹாச புராணங்களில் கூறுகின்ற 56 தேசங்களில் ஸௌராஷ்டிரம் ஒர் தேசம். இது பூர்வத்தில் மிக செல்வம் பொருந்தியதும் செழிப்புள்ளதுமாய் மிருந்தது. எல்லைகள் — வடக்கில் குஜராத், சிந்துதேசம், மார்வாரி தேசங்களும் கிழக்கில் மேற்குராஜஸ்தானமும், மேற்குமாவதேசமும்; தெற்கில் யவனசமுத்திரம்.

மலைகள் — வடக்கில் ஆரியாவளி; தெற்கில் விந்தியகிரி; மத்தியில் கிரினா; உஜ்ஜயந்தகிரி. ஆறுகள் — சுப்பிரமதி, மாஹி, ரேவ முதலிய சிறு நதிகள். (2) பூர்வத்தில் இத்தேசம் ஐந்து ராஷ்டிரங்களாகப் பிரிக்கப்பட்டிருந்தும் ஒரே அரசுக்குள்ளடங்கி சுகமாயிருந்த காலத்தில், சிறப்புள்ள இத்தேசத்தின் செல்வத்தைக் கண்டு அபகரிக்க விரும்பி சமீப தேசத்து அரசர்களான யவனர், பராசீகர், மிலேச்சர், கிரேக்கர் முதலானோர் - கி. பி. 658-ம் வருஷம் முதல் 400 வருஷ காலம் வரைக்கும் படை எடுத்துக் கொள்ளையடித்துக்கொண்டு வந்தார்கள். அக்காலங்களிலேயே மேற்கூறிய மதகுருக்களும், ஜெயினியர்களும், பவுத்தர்களும் வெகுவாய் இத்தேசத்தில் பிரவேசித்து மதங்களை கெடுக்க ஆரம்பித்தார்கள். அது முதல் இத்தேசஸ்தர்களுக்கு நேரிட்ட ராஜ்ஜியக்ஷோபம் முதலான இடையூறுகளை சஹிக்கக்கூடாமையால் பிரியமான தங்கள் தேச பட்டணங்களை விட்டு கலஹமில்லாமல் க்ஷேமமாயிருந்த தேசங்களிலும், வடதேச, விந்தியமலை நாடுகளிலும், தென் இந்திய முதலான பற்பல தேசங்களுக்கு சென்றார்கள். (3) வடநாட்டில் குடியேறினவர்கள் தங்கள் தேச நடை வுடை பாஷைகளை அந்த தேச நடை வுடை பாஷைகளோடு ஒத்திருந்தபடியால் அந்த தேசஸ்தர்களோடு கூடி ஒருமித்திருக்கின்றார்கள். தென் இந்தியாவில் குடியேறினவர்களோ சுயதேச நடை வுடை பாவனைகள் இந்த தேசஸ்தர்களோடு ஒத்திராமையால் அந்தந்த வர்ணஸ்தர்களோடு கலந்து கொள்ளவும் நடவடிக்கைகளை அனுசரிக்கவும் கூடாமையாய் விட்டது.

இவர்கள் கிருஷ் வாணிஜ்யிய முதலான சீவனோபாயம் செய்து வருகிறார்கள். இவர்கள் வியாபாரமான சங்கதிகளைத் தவிர மற்ற விஷயங்களில் இத் தேசத்தார்களுடன் யாதொரு சம்பந்தப்படாமல் சுய தேசாசாரத்துடன் வசிக்கின்றார்கள்.

அடியில் விவரித்திருக்கிற ஸ்தலங்களில் லௌராஷ்டர் வசிக்கின்றார்கள்.

1. மதுரை - பாமகுடி - திண்டுக்கல் - பெரியகுளம் - பழனி - சீவக்கோட்டை - வத்தலகுண்டு - சிவகங்கை - இராமநாதபுரம். ஆக ஜனங்கள் 50,000.
2. திருநெல்வேலி - பாளையங்கோட்டை - மத்தானி - வீரவல்லூர் - விளங்குடி - புதுக்குடி - கோட்டார். ஆக ஜனங்கள் 3,000.
3. திருச்சி ஒப்பள்ளி - ஒறை யூர் - திருவரங்கம் - புத்தூர் - புதுக்கோட்டை - இலுப்பூர். ஆக ஜனங்கள் 15,000.
4. தஞ்சாவூர் - கும்பகோணம் - அய்யம்பேட்டை - அம்மாபேட்டை - புலன்கிரி - பாசிக்கடை - அல்லூர் - எகப்பட்டணம். ஆக ஜனங்கள் 20,000.
5. சேலம் - செவ்வாபேட்டை - ருசிபுரம் - நாமக்கல் - பறமதி - பெங்களுர் - சகலேசபுரம் - முதலான மைசூர்களிலும். ஆக ஜனங்கள் 8,000.
6. புதுச்சேரி - கூடலூர் முதலிய இடங்களிலும். ஆக ஜனங்கள் 1,000.
7. வாலாஜாப்பேட்டை - வேலூர் - குடியாத்தம் - ஆறணி - ககிரி - நாறணாவனம் - திருப்பதி. ஆக ஜனங்கள் 5,000.
8. சென்னப்பட்டணம் - காஞ்சிபுரம் முதலான இடங்களிலும் ஆக ஜனங்கள் 2,000.

ஆக மொத்தத்துக்கு இலக்ஷத்தி நாலாயிரம் ஜனங்களுக்கதிகமாகவே இருக்கின்றார்கள்.

(இஃது 1891-ம் ஆண்டு ஜனசங்கியைக் கணக்குப்படியாம்.)

